



DECEMBER 2011

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE:
'TIS THE SEASON



Real or Fake?

Each year during the holiday season there arise entertaining [debates around real vs. artificial Christmas trees](#). The decision on what kind of tree to buy can be difficult, especially for those searching for the perfect holiday experience while striving to be environmentally conscious. With that in mind, and with kudos to the [American Grove website](#) where this debate was recently addressed, let us attempt to dispel some common myths about real trees. The following article was adapted by Sarah C. Gracey, Kentucky's State Urban Forestry Coordinator.

Myth 1: Real trees are cut down from forests. While the [US Forest Service](#) allows a small number of permits to cut wild trees (to allow for fire breaks or thin planting units), most trees are grown on a farm, just like any other agricultural crop.

Myth 2: You save a tree by using a fake tree. Because these trees are grown as a crop, you are buying a harvested product grown for this purpose. In contrast, [fake trees](#) are shipped in cardboard boxes (a forest product), so you don't really "save" a tree by using one.

Myth 3: Real trees aggravate allergies. Evergreen pollen is not a known allergen. Of the tens of thousands of tree species, less than 100 are known to cause allergies and only a few of these are conifers. Even if a tree was an aggravator, it is unlikely to produce pollen in December. If you are sensitive to allergies it is not a bad idea to hose down your real tree before bringing indoors because, of course, it could have collected dust and pollen while growing. Also, note if you are sensitive to these things anyway, a plastic tree over years will continue to collect dust and molds as well. ([Google](#) the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology for ideas on how to prevent holiday allergies.)

Myth 4: Fake trees are better because you can reuse them. At some point, a [fake tree](#) will end up in a landfill because it is not non-recyclable. Because fake trees also are not biodegradable, they are an especially very unfriendly option for the Earth. Most fake trees are used only six to nine years before being thrown away.

Myth 5: Christmas trees are a fire safety hazard. The reality is that the chance of a real tree being accidentally ignited is extremely rare. Keep your tree freshly watered every day, use new lower heat LED lights on them and keep open flames away from them.

Myth 6: Real trees cost too much. In Washington, most trees cost between \$20 and \$45 for locally grown trees and in that same range for trees shipped from other states. If you spend \$25 on a tree each year, and a plastic tree purchaser spends \$300, the plastic tree owner would have to use it for 12 years to break even. This length of time is over the average that most people keep artificial

trees.

Myth 7: Fake trees are fireproof. This is simply false information -- many plastic trees catch fire each year. According to a report from the National Fire Protection Association, 28 percent of home fires involving a tree involved artificial trees.

Myth 8: Real trees have pesticides and chemicals on them. Myths such as this often get a foothold due to the disconnect that many people have with agricultural practices. Chemicals are used by farmers only when needed and only according to the specified instructions of the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration. To date, there are no research articles suggesting that harmful levels of chemical residue exist on real trees. On the flip side, there have been studies showing a potential health danger of lead dust coming from plastic trees. In fact, the State of California requires a warning label for lead content on plastic trees and wreaths.

Myth 9: Real trees end up in landfills. Unlike an artificial tree, a natural tree is 100 percent biodegradable. Even if it did end up in a landfill, the natural tree would break down. However, there are recycling programs for natural trees nationwide. If you live in a rural area, you can put your tree in a farm pond to help build fish habitat, or toss it in woods for small game habitat. When you see trees waiting on the curbs to be picked up for recycling, they are waiting for their next phase of life and will be reused as a natural product. They are not going to waste.

Myth 10: Real trees are a hassle and a mess. Yes, when you move the tree in and out of the house, you will need to vacuum. Hey, you probably needed to do it anyway, right? Yes, they do need to be watered each day, but what is a half of a minute between friends? Other than that, I am not sure why it would be a hassle... get the kids off the couch and go get some fresh air and get a tree.



Real holiday trees are grown on [family owned tree farms](#). Purchasing a real tree makes an important economic contribution to many rural communities in Washington.

Real trees are a renewable, recyclable natural resource. Plastic, artificial fake trees are none of these things. Go green this holiday season, support your local economy, and celebrate in style with a real tree. Visit www.nwchristmastree.org for more information.

Real trees are grown in
Washington

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Do you have a story to share in Tree Link? [Contact us!](#)

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I hear the wind among the trees
Playing the celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,

Like keys of some great instrument.
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

COORDINATOR'S CORNER



I had the opportunity to go to the Arbor Day Foundation's Partners in Community Forestry Conference in November. It is always a great chance to reconnect with people from all across the country who are passionate about trees in our communities. The Urban and Community Forestry program managers were able to spend a day in meetings to catch up on each other's programs and learn what is happening nationally to support this great program. It was once again a reminder to me of all the fantastic work that Washington communities do! Many ideas and opportunities are coming our way. Be sure to watch Tree Link to find learn of grant opportunities or new educational materials available.

The conference also was a great reminder that developing, nurturing, and maintaining partnerships are the only way we can grow healthy and vibrant forests in our cities and towns. There are a lot of organizations out there that can help you achieve your goals. If you have examples of great partnerships, send me an email at sarah.foster@dnr.wa.gov and we may feature it in the Tree Link. I wish you all a healthy and peaceful end to 2011 and all the best as we welcome 2012!

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GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

WOOD BORING BEETLES COME IN WITH THE FURNITURE

BY DNR's Ear to the Ground Blog

As Katie Collins ate dinner at her home on Whidbey Island, she became especially focused on several large, conspicuous insects that started popping out of her Douglas-fir dining table.

As the wood from her table had warmed and dried in the house, it shrank and adjusted. But one day, the table seemed to be making noises.

"Very rhythmic, almost like a faint clock ticking... only a little ragged around the edges," Katie said.

She feared it was termites, until a large black and white beetle with long legs and antennae emerged from the table top.

Glenn Kohler, DNR's forest entomologist, identified the beetle from a photograph Katie emailed. The family is "Cerambycidae," long-horned wood-boring beetles, probably *Xylotrechus longitarsus* which is native to western Washington and bores in Douglas-fir. *X. longitarsus* is one of the most commonly collected long-horned borers in insect traps that are baited with general wood borer attractants, which smell like yummy, dead trees to beetles.

Homeowners who have beetles emerging from their wood products often get concerned and are tempted to spend a lot of money on pesticide treatments.

"This is usually unnecessary," says Kohler. "You may have to patch or replace a board or repair the roof, but these beetles won't reinfest. They need new, freshly dying trees to lay their eggs on, not a house or beam or table that's been debarked and is too dried out. Resealing across the holes can make them inhospitable for other types of wood-boring insects that tunnel within older, dryer wood."

Katie's been counting the beetles that have emerged from her table (three so far, and she suspects



Xylotrechus longitarsus - a wood boring beetle - is native to western Washington and bores in Douglas-fir.

two more are still inside). She can simply wait for the rest of the beetles to emerge and then fill the exit holes (perhaps leaving enough of a visual trace to be a conversation starter).

The gentleman who supplied the slabs for Katie's table joked that he should have charged extra for the beetles because she's getting so much entertainment from her new table. Thanks, but no thanks!

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THE LANDS COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

1st ANNUAL REFOREST SPOKANE DAY

By Amanda Swan, Director of Development & Communications, The Lands Council; with Garth Davis, Eastern Washington Urban and Community Forestry Assistant, Spokane County Conservation District

The Spokane community is a lot of things -- determined, involved, supportive, and passionate. We love our community, which is why upon receiving notification that the Land's Council project, [Reforest Spokane Day](#), was chosen as a finalist in Tom's of Maine's "50 States for Good" challenge, we turned to them. Through a tremendous voting effort from the Spokane community, our goal to plant 10,000 native ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*) in a day became a reality when we finished in second place with a \$20,000 prize.



On Saturday, October 22nd, with the help of **more than 900 volunteers**, we successfully planted pine seedlings at twelve different planting sites throughout Spokane, including Washington Department of Transportation right-of-way, Spokane County Conservation Futures property, and sites owned by the City of Spokane.

The morning started cool and sunny, providing perfect planting weather, and abundant smiles from volunteers. After a quick planting demonstration and talk on why the mighty ponderosa pine was selected, we got to work. At many of the sites, the ground was rocky -- yet volunteers pushed on, making use of pick-axes and Pulaskis to get the job done.

As we finished our second hour of planting rain clouds gathered overhead, first drizzling and then building to a steady rain. It seemed that Mother Nature was on-board with our efforts, giving the seedlings a watering as they settled into their new locations. We cannot thank our volunteers enough for their amazing efforts -- especially in the less-than-ideal weather conditions.

Among the 900-plus volunteers planting trees was State Rep. Andy Billig, Spokane.

As the noon hour approached, our work came to an end. Fittingly, the morning concluded with a dedication at the Finch

Arboretum of a 6-foot ponderosa pine in honor of the late Dr. Wangari Maathai, founder of the Greenbelt Movement. Dr. Maathai, working with the National Council of Women of Kenya, was responsible for beginning and growing a movement around community tree planting. This movement resulted in the planting of millions of trees throughout Africa and is credited with an increase in women's rights, environmental restoration, and economic stability for families.

After starting the day dry and warm, our volunteers were now tired, wet and muddy, but one thing remained: smiles still covered the faces of the hundreds of amazing volunteers. And why not? Together, we had successfully done something truly amazing for our community, completing the largest community-based tree planting we've ever been part of!

The seedlings, currently only 8-10 inches, are expected to grow

to a mature height of 100 feet! Our team chose to plant ponderosa pines for a variety of reasons. The species is native to the Inland Northwest and thrives in our dry, rocky soils. Beyond that, ponderosa pines offer tremendous benefits, from reducing air pollution, to absorbing stormwater which protects our river and aquifer, to creating more areas of shade, to quieting traffic noise, to producing a more beautiful aesthetic. The Lands Council thinks of the ponderosa pine as our environmental mascot here in Eastern Washington.

At the core of this project was really a sense of community support. As we mentioned, the Spokane community was the driving force behind pushing our project from conception to reality. It's also worth noting that with the humbling amount of support our efforts received, it is now our goal to make Reforest Spokane Day an annual occurrence, with another 10,000 trees planted each year.

As we reflect on the past several months of voting, promoting, recruiting and then planting, our entire team is so thankful for the opportunity Tom's of Maine provided to us and the Spokane community. It's not only refreshing, but deeply reassuring to see such support for our environment right here in Spokane!

Note: The Lands Council is a local grassroots non-profit dedicated to protecting the quality of life in the Inland Northwest. The Council works to preserve and revitalize Inland Northwest forests, water, and wildlife through advocacy, education, effective action, and community engagement. For more information, [visit the Lands Council website](#)



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WINTER WOES? PREPARE TO CARE FOR YOUR TREES

Winter weather means frigid temperatures, icy winds, and lots of snow, in many parts of Washington. While we can choose to stay inside or bundle up and venture forth, trees don't have that option; they withstand the elements as best they can. You can help your tree(s) during this challenging part of the year, by following a few suggestions offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

1. Put composted organic mulch under your tree in the fall or early winter to help retain water and reduce temperature extremes. A thin layer of mulch will act like a blanket and give the tree's roots a little extra winter protection.
2. Give your trees a drink. Winter droughts require watering as much as summer droughts. If temperatures permit, an occasional watering during the winter on young trees can be a life saver. But be sure to water only when soil and trees are cool but not frozen.
3. Prune your trees. Winter is actually one of the best times to prune because it is easier to see the structure of trees without their leaves. But limit pruning to deadwood and poorly placed branches in order to save as many living branches as possible. Learn how to prune correctly by taking a pruning class, reading a book, or visiting a website.
4. Prevent mechanical injuries. Branch breakage or splitting can be



caused by ice and snow accumulation, or chewing and rubbing by animals. Prevent problems from occurring on young trees by shaking heavy snow or ice from branches and wrapping the base of trees in a hard, plastic guard or a metal hardware cloth. Wrapping trees with burlap or plastic cloth also can prevent temperature damage. Just remember to remove the wraps and guards in the spring to prevent damage when the tree begins to grow.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research around the world.

Headquartered in Champaign, Ill., ISA is dedicated to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees. For more information, contact a local ISA Certified Arborist or visit www.isa-arbor.com. ISA's consumer education website is www.treesaregood.com.

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COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE' WASHINGTON'S ROADSIDES

by Sandy Salisbury, Washington Department of Transportation

Washington is a beautiful state. Many people view it from the highway as they visit, travel back and forth to work, or while running errands. Our roadsides are part of our community forests. In the past decade, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has planted tens of thousands of trees on our roadsides and on our mitigation sites, contributing to community forestry efforts. Where highways serve as main streets for communities, WSDOT landscape architects work with those communities that take responsibility for the trees and to blend into existing street tree programs when this is requested by the community.

Did you ever wonder why our roadsides look the way they do?

WSDOT has been working toward sustainable roadsides since 1996. A sustainable roadside is defined as a roadside designed and maintained with the goal of combining successful operational, environmental, and visual functions with low maintenance costs.

The plants on our roadsides are used to achieve permanent erosion control, reduction and treatment of stormwater runoff, slope stabilization, carbon sequestration, driver guidance and navigation, and screening of undesirable views both from and toward the roadway, among other functions. Of course, they are often beautiful, but we focus on the environmental and operational benefits of roadside vegetation.



Highway roadsides have unique conditions that provide difficult challenges, such as highly compacted soils that have been stripped of organic matter, repeated disturbances as vehicles run off the road, high weed pressure, lack of a seed bank for desirable plants, and high public scrutiny.

Over the past 20 years, WSDOT has shifted from an ornamental approach to roadside restoration that more closely mimics nature in order to develop self-sustaining plant communities that are primarily native. We do this by combining mineral soil with compost and using compost and wood chip mulches as erosion control measures. We get double duty from compost as a best management practice of erosion control because it also enhances plant establishment and long term growth. Using a very woody soil modification also



discourages weeds while providing an excellent growing medium for native plants.

While road building impacts roadsides, WSDOT's policy is to restore those roadsides in a responsible way that minimizes the environmental and social impacts of transportation facility construction and maintenance. For more information [please visit our website](#)

Sandy Salisbury is a member of the Washington Community Forestry Council representing the Washington State Department of Transportation.

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FREE WORKSHOPS OFFERED MUNICIPAL TREE CARE WORKSHOPS - PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

When was the last time you went to the doctor with an illness and s/he recommended blood-letting as a cure? Like medical research, tree research has changed over time. New tree care and management practices developed through research have proven better for trees and more cost effective in the long run.

Tree planting is a priority in many communities. It is also an investment of community resources. In order to create a sustainable community forest, one that will reap all the benefits trees provide, it is important to stay current with the best management practices for taking care of this valuable community resource. Even in these challenging economic times where budgets for training may be non-existent, training is essential.

During two recent municipal tree care workshops, staff from 11 Washington communities took advantage of free municipal tree workshops organized by the DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program. The free all-day workshops included the most current information on planting, pruning, and after-care of trees. The events were sponsored by the City of Camas and Grays Harbor Public Utility District, with support from local arborists.



The DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program plans to provide workshops throughout the state and we are looking for facilities that can host up to about 30 individuals. If you work for a municipality, county or other public jurisdiction, and are interested in training for you or your staff, please call the DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program: 360-523-8733

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APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE 2012 COMMUNITY TREE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

The Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI) is a continuing educational curriculum consisting of educational



sessions specifically tailored to the needs of municipal parks, planning, or public works employees who have tree related responsibilities in their city. CTMI 2012 is a combination of online and place-based sessions. There are five sessions from March through October, with face-to-face meetings for the first and last sessions and three online sessions in between.

CTMI 2012 is open to any municipal employee in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Idaho. CTMI is appropriate for anyone who coordinates community forestry issues, reviews tree plans, issues permits, or inspects trees in your city. ISA Certified Arborists may obtain up to 20 credits for attending the CTMI.

The application deadline for the 2012 CTMI class is January 31, 2012. [Contact us](#) to obtain an application.

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ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION IN KIRKLAND



Over 90 volunteers planted hundreds of trees and native plants

On Saturday, November 12, 2011, the City of Kirkland celebrated its tenth consecutive annual Arbor Day celebration at Juanita Bay Park. Over 90 volunteers planted more than 800 trees and other native plants, making it a very successful Arbor Day planting event and ceremony.

Typically Arbor Day is observed in April; however, Kirkland traditionally celebrates Arbor Day in the fall to take advantage of the increased rainfall and to coincide with a forest restoration project. The event brings together many different groups of volunteers -- all working together to restore Kirkland's urban forest and increase its canopy.

Many months in advance of the event, volunteers, EarthCorps, and Kirkland Parks Maintenance removed invasive plants and prepared areas for the planting event. This year, many of the native plants were leftover from park renovations, carefully maintained by volunteer Native Plant Stewards over the summer. The commemorative Arbor Day tree was actually purchased with funds from a penalty fee assessed for unauthorized tree removal!

Volunteers spent the morning planting the designated restoration areas, then gathered with Kirkland Mayor Joan McBride, Deputy Mayor Penny Sweet, City Urban Forester Deb Powers and Linden Mead, who is Urban & Community Forestry Specialist from Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Linden spoke about the significance of Arbor Day and Kirkland's role in urban forest stewardship. The mayor planted a commemorative western red cedar with the help of a few enthusiastic participants.



Read the [Kirkland Reporter's coverage of the Arbor Tree planting ceremony](#).

City Forester Deb Powers preparing the Arbor Day tree

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WEB-UCATION - LINKS TO HELP YOU LEARN

Four new offerings from WSU Extension Forestry publications are available online for free download, but you may order a limited number of hard copies for a nominal printing and postage fee. Contact please contact [Kevin Zobrist](#) for details 425-357-6017.

The publications are:

[FS043E: Forestry Education and Assistance for Washington Forest Landowners](#)

[FS055E: Assessing Tree Health](#)

[FS056E: Seasonal Foliage Loss in Pacific Northwest Conifer Trees](#)

[FS057E: Recognizing Sapsucker Damage to Your Trees](#)

Get in touch with and share information with other municipal arborists in Washington by joining the [WATREETALK listserv](#).

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EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

IS YOUR COMMUNITY A TREE CITY USA?

The deadline for Tree City USA applications is "officially" December 1 in Washington, but if your community is interested in the designation, you can apply throughout the month of December. Find out more about Tree City USA at www.arborday.org or call us at 1-800-523-8733.

WASHINGTON ARBORICULTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM: LEARN FROM THE EXPERTS.

Learn more about urban forestry planning and management by taking advantage of the [Washington Arboriculture Exchange Program](#). This mini-grant program is designed for the purpose of exchanging urban forestry expertise, management ideas, and technology. You learn directly from experts through an onsite visit with a municipal arborist in a Washington community with a thriving community forestry program. The DNR Urban and Community Forestry Program covers travel and lodging expenditures.

If you are interested in or responsible for developing or expanding an urban and community forestry program in your community, whether a community planner, public works or parks manager, or tree board member, you are eligible. For more information, visit www.dnr.wa.gov/urbanforestry to find the [application](#), or give us a call at 800-523-8733.

FRUIT TREE PRUNING

Sunday, January 8, 10 AM - Noon, Sand Point Magnuson Park, Building 406 (The Brig)

This class covers the basics of fruit tree pruning, covering apple, cherry, plum, and pear trees.

No preregistration is necessary. Just show up and pay at the door: \$15 for the general public; \$10 for PlantAmnesty members, \$5 for horticulture college students and native Spanish speakers.

For more information: Email info@plantamnesty.org or call 206-783-9813

TREE FRUIT ORCHARDING WORKSHOPS FOR WESTERN WASHINGTON

Workshop instructor Gary Moulton, tree fruit scientist, consultant, and former manager of the Westside tree fruit program at WSU's Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center, will teach three classes this spring. NOTE: Space is limited for all workshops and

advance registration and pre-payment is required, (includes a box lunch).

All classes to be held at Ed's Apples, 13420 339th Ave., S.E., Sultan, (just off State Route 2). For more information on the workshops, contact Andrew Corbin at corbina@wsu.edu or call 425-357-6012.

ORCHARDING ON THE WESTSIDE

Saturday, January 22, 9 AM - 4 PM

Topics: basics of tree fruit production, fruit types and varieties, rootstocks, nutrient management, pest management, orchard layout, pruning and harvest indices.

\$75 per person, [register on line.](#)

DORMANT PRUNING

Saturday, February 26, 10 AM - 3 PM

Topics: the basics of pruning emphasis on goals and techniques of dormant pruning, the physiology of a tree's response to pruning, what to look for in deciding whether to prune.

\$65 per person, [register on line.](#)

GRAFTING

Saturday, April 16, 10 AM - 3 PM

Topics: different types of grafting, choosing and taking scion wood, choosing a receptor site, and making the graft and sealing it properly. Participants will practice grafting indoors, and then move outdoors to work on larger trees. Dress appropriately and bring gloves and a grafting knife, or purchase one at the workshop for \$15.

\$75 per person, [register on line.](#)

WOMEN'S ARBORICULTURE CONFERENCE 2012

March 21-23, Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre in Parksville, Vancouver Island, B.C.

The conference targets arborists, foresters, horticulturalists, landscape architects and designers, master gardeners, land planners, and managers. Workshops with nationally acclaimed speakers, with a keynote address by Dr. Kathy Wolf.

For more information contact info@womenarborists.ca

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Contact Us:

WASHINGTON DNR Urban and Community Forestry

P.O. Box 47037, Olympia, WA 98504-7037

urban_forestry@dnr.wa.gov

Sarah Foster, U&CF Program Manager

(360) 902-1704

sarah.foster@dnr.wa.gov

Linden L. Mead, Tree Link Editor

U&CF Specialist

(800) 523-8733

linden.mead@dnr.wa.gov

Nicki Eisfeldt, Grant Coordinator

GIS Specialist

(360) 902-1330

nicholene.eisfeldt@dnr.wa.gov

Garth Davis, Forestry Program Manager

Spokane County Conservation District

U&CF Assistance for Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Ferry, Lincoln & Whitman Counties
(509) 535-7274
garth-davis@sccd.org

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The Washington Urban and Community Forestry Program is made possible with assistance from the [USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program](#).

The program's purpose is to educate citizens and decision-makers about the economic, environmental, psychological, and aesthetic benefits of trees and to assist local governments, citizen groups and volunteers in planting and sustaining healthy trees and vegetation wherever people live and work in Washington State. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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